



Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Sub Committee held in the Town Hall on Tuesday 13 July 2021 at 4pm.

Councillors present:

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| Desna Allen | Declan Baseley |
| Jenny Budgetell | Gemma Grimes |
| David Poole | John Scragg (Chairman - Part) |
| Matthew Short (Chairman - Part) | Myla Watts |

Officers present: Mark Smith, Chief Executive
Matt Kirby, Director of Community Services
Nick Rees, Director of Resources
Gillian Ballinger, Head of Finance
Heather Rae, Head of Democratic Services
Amy Abram, Finance Assistant
Kieran Moore, Technician/Duty Officer

Public present: None present

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no written or verbal questions from any member of the public.

The Mayor of Chippenham, Councillor John Scragg in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pete Cousins due to attendance at a funeral.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION

Councillor David Poole substituted for Councillor Pete Cousins.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for Chairman of the Finance Sub Committee. Councillor Matthew Short was proposed by Councillor Declan Baseley and seconded by Councillor Gemma Grimes. There were no further nominations and it was;

RESOLVED that

Councillor Matthew Short be elected Chairman of the Finance Sub Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

Councillor Matthew Short in the Chair

5. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for Vice Chairman of the Finance Sub Committee. Councillor Pete Cousins was proposed by Councillor Myla Watts and seconded by Councillor David Poole. There were no further nominations and it was;

RESOLVED that

Councillor Pete Cousins be elected Vice Chairman of the Finance Sub Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED that

The Terms of Reference for the Finance Sub Committee as agreed by Full Council were noted.

8. PLANNING FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND USE OF CIL INCOME

The Director of Resources presented the report providing Councillors with an indicative draft revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for Capital/Ear Marked Funds (C/EMFs) and the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income. The Director of Resources explained the appendices of the report and highlighted that Councillors should consider what effect spending on 'must have', 'should have' and 'could have' items would have, noting that borrowing funds would necessitate an increase in the precept. The Director of Resources highlighted the recommendations of the report for Councillors to consider.

Councillors thanked the Director of Resources and the Finance Team for their work. Councillors asked for background information on larger projects such as the Neeld Development and Stanley Park Sports Ground, this would be circulated after the meeting. Councillors spoke in favour of tangible items such as play areas that could be improved, and the public could enjoy.

Improvements to enhance overall cycle, pedestrian and routes to bus stops were raised by Councillors as a potential use of CIL money. Officers highlighted that this was a responsibility of Wiltshire Council who receive the main proportion of CIL monies. Officers are requesting that CIL as a result of new development in Chippenham be spent in Chippenham. Councillors should consider whether they want to pay for infrastructure that is the responsibility of Wiltshire Council to provide.

Councillors supported an approach that would deliver value for money with least impact on the tax payer and precept. Councillors considered the issues outlined in the report and made the following comments;

- **Whether any Ear Marked Funds should continue or be entirely superseded by a single Capital Fund;**
Councillors supported a list of items to manage the budget and favoured C/EMFs to be itemised. This would ensure the expenditure can be managed and planned effectively.
- **How a single Capital fund might ringfence funds for specific future projects;**
There were no specific views expressed on this topic.
- **The appropriate level of C/EMFs to maintain at any time;**
Councillors recognised the need to be custodians of the Council's finances. It was noted that all projects could not be completed at once due to capacity and items on the list had been identified as 'must have, should have and could have'. No specific level of C/EMFs was identified.

Councillors questioned the process for suggesting new ideas and the purpose of the Finance Sub Committee. The Director of Resources confirmed the Terms of Reference of this Sub Committee are to discuss ideas/proposals and put forward recommendations rather than make decisions. The purpose of the Corporate Strategic Plan and how the budget gets approved annually was outlined and Councillors were requested to share any ideas for discussion.

Councillors discussed whether all Councillors should be able to comment on how capital expenditure money is spent, and whether the public should be consulted. It was noted that Councillors can attend any meeting and are elected by the public to make decisions on their behalf and that there will be a Corporate Strategic Plan refresh for 2022/26 which all Councillors can contribute to. However, it is impractical to consult on every decision. It was highlighted that public meetings are open to all Councillors and members of the public. Public Question Time facilitates interaction between members of the public and the Council and Councillors can discuss ideas within their groups and bring back to the Sub Committee.

- **That CIL income should be considered as a source of income to fund the Council's own Capital Expenditure projects;**
Councillors highlighted new residents and developments of Chippenham, who pay tax or contribute to CIL, should benefit from the Council's expenditure. Councillors questioned whether using CIL for the refurbishment or maintenance of the Town Hall would address infrastructure required from new developments. It was highlighted that any CIL expenditure is consulted with Wiltshire Council to ensure it is applicable. It was highlighted that funding of the Council's capital expenditure, whether from CIL or the Precept, needed to be considered and each item should be considered on its own merit.
- **Whether the Finance Sub Committee should have some delegated authority to decide upon capital expenditure e.g. to determine how a general maintenance budget for the year might be spent;**
There were no comments from Councillors, it was noted that the Sub Committee had no delegated authority.

- **Whether this year's capital expenditure budget should be amended upwards;**
Councillors favoured not amending the capital expenditure budget upwards and highlighted wider topics of how the Council wants to manage assets such as the Neeld, whether subsidised for the community or for profit.
- **The appetite of the Council for any major capital projects that would require an increase in the Precept to finance borrowing costs;**
Councillors requested further detail on major capital projects.
- **The level of resource needed to deliver capital projects;**
There were no comments from Councillors
- **Councillors' thoughts on the type of capital projects included in the indicative revised capital MTFP.**

Councillor Myla Watts proposed an amendment to the existing recommendation of the report to add that the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee, Climate Emergency Advisory Group and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be consulted. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Declan Baseley and with the majority in favour was carried. A vote was taken on the amended recommendation and with the majority in favour, it was;

RECOMMENDED that

i) Officers bring a further revision to the draft MTFP for Capital Expenditure to a future Finance Sub Committee meeting, taking into account Councillors' comments, further work on the cost estimations and any capital impact from the Ecological Emergency initiatives. To consult with the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee, Climate Emergency Advisory Group and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

9. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION

Councillors did not request any specific items for communication.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance Sub Committee will take place on Tuesday 28 September 2021 at 4pm.

Propose at next meeting.

The meeting closed at 6pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Signed on behalf of the Town Council as a true record of the meeting.

Signature

Date